

benefit to discharged service members while also giving our military an effective recruiting tool. We understand that there have been significant economic, societal, and military changes since the implementation of the GI Bill. These changes must be addressed, and Congress is now addressing its responsibility to make improvements to the structure and benefit level of this program.

It is unfortunate to mention, however, that this bill came to the floor of the House of Representatives without a mark-up. While this bill does much for American veterans and service members, many, including myself, wish it could do more. I intended to introduce an amendment to H.R. 1291 that would index the GI Bill to educational inflation rather than the Consumer Price Index. Indexing the GI Bill to the inflating cost of college tuition and expenses would allow veterans and beneficiaries of the GI Bill to receive full educational benefits without constant Congressional or governmental adjustment. The benefits would correspond with the significant costs of an institution of higher learning.

My colleague, Representative LANE EVANS, was going to introduce his bill, H.R. 320, as a substitute to H.R. 1291 during mark-up. H.R. 320, of which I am a co-sponsor, was designed to restore the GI Bill program to a benefit level comparable to that once provided to veteran students after World War II. Essentially, H.R. 320 would pay for the full cost of attending college and would remove the large enrollment fee that is paid by service members. This legislation is modeled after the recommendations made by Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Anthony Principi when he was chairman for a Congressional Commission charged with studying the needs of military service members when they leave the military to return to civilian life. This legislation enjoys broad Congressional support and the support of several national veteran service organizations. Despite the absence of a mark-up or a chance for full Committee deliberation on this matter, the provisions within H.R. 320 and the amendment I intended to offer continue to enjoy strong support among Members of Congress and veteran service organizations. I, along with my colleagues, will continue to address this issue until all our veterans are finally given a fully functional, fully beneficial, fully enhanced GI Bill.

I am a supporter of H.R. 1291 because this measure does provide a considerable increase in veterans' educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill. Under H.R. 1291 the monthly benefit would increase to \$800 per month for fiscal year 2002, increasing to \$1,100 by fiscal year 2004. While I do believe that students and service members entering college in 2002 would benefit more from a bill that includes the amount of benefits that would be provided to veterans if the bill was adjusted to educational inflation, I encourage my colleagues to vote for the passage of this bill. It is the first step in a long road toward veterans' benefits enhancement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1291.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD COMBAT UNITS DEPLOYED IN SUPPORT OF ARMY OPERATIONS IN BOSNIA

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 154) honoring the continued commitment of the Army National Guard combat units deployed in support of Army operations in Bosnia, recognizing the sacrifices made by the members of those units while away from their jobs and families during those deployments, recognizing the important role of all National Guard and Reserve personnel at home and abroad to the national security of the United States, and acknowledging, honoring, and expressing appreciation for the critical support by employers of the Guard and Reserve.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 154

Whereas in October 1999 the Army announced a groundbreaking multi-year plan to mobilize and deploy the headquarters of National Guard combat divisions to command the United States sector of the Multinational Stabilization Force in Bosnia and to employ significant elements of the Army National Guard enhanced combat brigades in that sector;

Whereas the 49th Armored Division, Texas Army National Guard, and Army National Guard combat units from the 30th Enhanced Separate Brigade of North Carolina and the 45th Enhanced Separate Brigade of Oklahoma have completed deployments in Bosnia, and 1,200 soldiers of the 48th Infantry Brigade of Georgia are as of June 2001 deployed to Bosnia in the largest such deployment of National Guard personnel in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization peacekeeping mission in Bosnia;

Whereas the more than 1,200,000 citizen-soldiers who comprise the National Guard and Reserve components of the Armed Forces nationwide commit significant time and effort in executing their important role in the Armed Forces;

Whereas these National Guard and Reserve citizen-soldiers serve a critical role as part of the mission of the Armed Forces to protect the freedom of United States citizens and the American ideals of justice, liberty, and freedom, both at home and abroad; and

Whereas thousands of employers nationwide continue their support for service of their employees in the Reserve components: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) honors the continuing service and commitment of the citizen-soldiers of the Army

National Guard combat units deployed in support of Army operations in Bosnia;

(2) recognizes the deployment of the 48th Infantry Brigade in March 2001 as an important milestone in that commitment;

(3) honors the sacrifices made by the families and employers of the members of those units during their time away from home;

(4) expresses deep gratitude for the continuing support of civilian employers for the service of their employees in the National Guard and Reserve;

(5) recognizes the critical importance of the National Guard and Reserve to the security of the United States; and

(6) supports providing the necessary resources to ensure the continued readiness of the National Guard and Reserve.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 154.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, introduced by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), honoring the continuing commitment of Army National Guard combat units in support of U.S. operations in Bosnia.

Throughout our history, America's citizen soldiers have played a crucial role in making and keeping the peace. Nowhere has this been more evident than in recent deployments of the National Guard to support peacekeeping missions in Bosnia. Clearly, we are increasingly reliant on the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve to perform peacetime operational missions. For example, in 1996, the National Guard and Reserves provided less than 1 million duty days of direct support to active components. Today, they are providing in excess of 12 million duty days of support annually, the equivalent of nearly 34,000 active duty personnel.

In October 1999, the Army announced an important decision to employ National Guard combat units and National Guard division headquarters in support of the NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. As a result, the 49th Armored Division headquarters for the Texas National Guard, and combat units from the 30th Enhanced Separate Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, and the 45th Enhanced Separate Brigade of the Oklahoma National Guard have completed deployments in Bosnia.

I am particularly proud of the 49th, because several of its members came from my district, soldiers like Bob Wenger of Amarillo, Texas. The 49th was the first Guard or Reserve unit to command active duty troops since World War II. They set the standard for others to follow. Today, more than 1,200 soldiers of the 48th Brigade, Georgia National Guard, have deployed in the largest such deployment of National Guard soldiers to Bosnia.

This resolution not only honors the commitment and dedication of the soldiers in these combat units who have left home and family to serve the Nation, but it also honors the sacrifices of their families and employers. It also serves as a reminder to us, and to the Nation, that the National Guard and Reserve are critically important to the security of the United States. Their readiness directly contributes to America's military readiness, and we must continue to provide the support necessary for both the active and reserve components to perform the missions assigned to them.

□ 1500

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 154, and I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

Madam Speaker, H. Con. Resolution 154 commends the continued commitment of the Army National Guard combat units deployed in support of Army operation in Bosnia. It recognizes the important role of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, and it expresses appreciation to the employers of the Guard and the Reserves.

Since the first units of the National Guard were mobilized for deployment to Bosnia in December of 1995, our National Guardsmen and women and Reservists have played a vital and significant role in Bosnia. Their determined efforts have helped to stabilize the area and deter hostilities to facilitate long-term peace in that area.

Recognizing their valuable contributions, the Army began to mobilize and deploy the headquarters of the Army National Guard combat divisions and enhanced combat brigades in Bosnia. As increasing numbers of our National Guard and Reserves are being called to duty for peacekeeping operations, humanitarian missions, and combat, we also need to recognize the effect that this has on their families and to recognize the valiant effort by these families when personnel go abroad. Like those on active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel would not be able to focus on their mission without the support and the strength of their families. Madam

Speaker, it really takes quite a lot out of families when someone gets uprooted and leaves their job for a while and goes across to work in Bosnia. So we really commend the families for their contributions and their sacrifices in this effort.

However, the Guard and the Reserve must also depend on the support of their employers. Can we imagine what it is like to have somebody who is very vital to one's business interests all of a sudden leave for 6 or 8 or 10 months? Without the support of employers across the country, Guard and Reservists would not be able to continue this important mission for the United States.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize and thank those employers for their essential support of the National Guard and our Reservists. It is the contributions of the service member, of the family, and the employers that play a role in our success in Bosnia and other regions. This successful combination allows us to have the best citizen soldiers in the world.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) the sponsor of this resolution.

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

In March, after completing preparations at Fort Polk, Louisiana and Fort Stewart, Georgia, some 1,200 soldiers of Georgia's 48th Infantry Brigade were deployed to Bosnia to participate in the peacekeeping mission. They are following in the footsteps of other National Guard units that have been mentioned such as the Texas division, the 39th Enhanced Separate Brigade of North Carolina, and the 45th Enhanced Separate Brigade of Oklahoma. Our citizen soldiers are adding their strength to our efforts to bring peace to a bitter and divided land.

These men and women are part of more than 1.2 million soldiers who play a critical part in our national defense as members of our National Guard and Reserve components. They contribute significant time and effort to executing their roles, and we as a Nation are very grateful.

Our citizen soldiers have helped defend our freedom since the first minutemen took up their muskets to meet the British at Concord Bridge. From those grassy fields of New England to the burning sands of Kuwait, our guardsmen and reservists have fought with distinction.

As citizen soldiers, most guardsmen and reservists have two careers, civilian and military. After a hard week on the job, neighbors may be headed to the beach for the weekend, but many guardsmen are headed off to drill and

to train. Neighbors may be watching emergencies on TV, but oftentimes guardsmen are already there helping victims of disorder and disaster.

As we see our guardsmen called up to serve in areas such as Bosnia over the long deployments, we should note the sacrifices as they leave home, family, and friends in the service of their country. This separation is hard on families and loved ones; but while we often note the burden on soldiers and their families, we often overlook someone who makes an equal sacrifice too, and those are the employers of those reservists and those guardsmen.

I want those employers to know that the Congress deeply appreciates the sacrifice that they knowingly make for our national security when they hire members of the National Guard and Reservists. As a small businessman, Madam Speaker, I know how business can be affected by the absence of a good worker for a period of as short as a day, much less for several weeks or months. It is tough on a business, no matter how large or small.

Our Nation is secure today because Americans stand ready to defend our freedom. The men and women of our National Guard and Reserve sacrifice their time and talent to serve in the military, even as they hold down those civilian jobs. The spirit of sacrifice is also exemplified by the families and the loved ones who support them whether they are off on a weekend drill or extended deployments overseas. For this we are grateful.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), our distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time. I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 154. I urge that all of us in this body vote for it.

This resolution honors the Army National Guard combat units in Bosnia, recognizes the sacrifices of Guard and Reserve families, and expresses appreciation to employers of the Guard and Reserve members for their critical support. The Guard and Reserves have become increasingly critical to our national security through the years. Guard and Reserve personnel have been deployed around the world for numerous missions, including peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

Madam Speaker, in recent weeks I have had the opportunity to visit with a good number of National Guard units in the Fourth Congressional District of Missouri, and soon I will have visited all of them. I must tell my colleagues that I am so proud of them. They are there because they want to be there. They take their training seriously; they take their mission seriously. When I asked them how many had been deployed in recent years, my colleagues should see the number of hands

that are raised. I thank them for their sincerity and their dedication to the State and to our government here in the United States.

The October 1999 announcement by the Army to mobilize and deploy National Guard combat divisions to command active and Reserve forces in Bosnia was an historical landmark. Other various Guard combat support and combat service support units have been participating in Bosnia since December of 1995. For example, the 1137th Military Police Company from Kennett, Missouri was mobilized for Bosnia in December of 1995. Since then, the 70th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and the 135th Military History Detachment from Jefferson City and the 40th Operational Support Airlift Command Detachment from Springfield have also seen service in Bosnia. These Missouri National Guardsmen and women have joined the thousands of guardsmen and reservists from across the Nation who have served the Nation so well.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

This is truly a unique time in the history of our Nation's military. The time of the National Guard being used solely for the purpose of missions within the U.S. borders is over. That is not to say the Guard does not play a vital role in our domestic situation, such as the flood recovery in my home area of Houston from the Storm Allison. In fact, and thank goodness, nearly 400 Guard members were called to active duty to assist the victims, my neighbors, in this devastation.

But that is not all they do. With the decreasing size of our active duty military, the role of the National Guard has never been more important. All too often we forget about the important service our Guard units play in protecting our Nation's interests abroad.

Last year in February, National Guardsmen began pulling active duty overseas for the first time since the Korean War. And, for the first time since American soldiers went to Bosnia in late 1995, an Army National Guard unit performed the headquarters function and provided the true component for the peacekeeping mission there.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that the approximately 750 men and women who served in this precedent-setting mission were from the Texas 49th Armored Division, the Fighting 49th of the Texas National Guard, also known as the Lone Star Division. This unit returned home in October of last year following an 8-month peacekeeping duty in Bosnia. I had the pleasure of enjoying Easter Sunday services with our troops in Bosnia. I cannot tell my colleagues how impressed I was with

the dedication and the professionalism and their dedication to the mission, our country, and their families.

This resolution today also hits home because one of my staff people, David Drake McGraw, will be commanding the Alpha Troop of the Maryland National Guard when it is deployed to Bosnia in a few months. My office is dealing with the same challenges as thousands of other employers across our country when employees, key employees are deployed as part of these units. Madam Speaker, I can tell my colleagues that it is not easy, but it is worthwhile. The sacrifice members of the National Guard make each year in order to serve their country through the military is in addition to working full-time jobs. It is great and must not be forgotten. I am proud of Drake, not only for his outstanding service to the residents of my district of Texas, but also for the sacrifice and service to our Nation.

Captain McGraw serves in the Maryland Army National Guard. His unit, the first of the 1/58 Cavalry, will be going to Bosnia on September 18 for about 7 months. He will be leaving behind his wife, Barbra and his young son, David. It is important to remember the sacrifice they are making while Drake is serving his country.

Madam Speaker, it is for these reasons that I proudly support this resolution.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, the National Guard personnel that are deployed in Bosnia are preventing widespread violence that could quickly reoccur if they were not there to serve their country in the cause of humanity. Every American owes them a deep debt of gratitude. They left their families, their homes, their careers behind to join our NATO allies on a mission that is saving lives and making the world safe from a cruel conflict, one that could spread uncontrollably if not held in check.

This call-up is not fun. It is tough. It is grueling, and it is dangerous duty. But they willingly serve, and we are grateful.

In March, 1,200 citizen soldiers of the 48th Infantry Brigade began a 6-month tour of duty in Bosnia, the largest Georgia Guard mobilization since Operation Desert Storm. Other Guard personnel from my State and from other States have also served as peacekeepers there, and I urge the House to pass this resolution to honor the commitment and the sacrifice of every National Guard soldier who has faithfully served and who faithfully answers the call.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

□ 1515

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I especially appreciate the leadership of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) for bringing this important resolution to honor the service of our National Guard heroes who have served our country so ably in Bosnia. I also thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for his efforts.

Madam Speaker, I have a particular interest in this resolution, and I am pleased to be a cosponsor because I am fortunate enough to represent Indiana's Atterbury National Guard base and Armed Forces Training Center at Atterbury. This facility has played an important role in preparing our reserve forces for deployment to the Bosnian theater. I am very proud of the work they do there.

In fact, Madam Speaker, the training facilities at Atterbury are the finest light fighting training site east of Mississippi, to hear them tell it. This distinction is deserved praise given the role they have played in getting our troops ready for service in Bosnia.

Since 1996, Hoosier National Guardsmen have had a continuous representation in Bosnia. Next spring, the 76th Separate Infantry Brigade will also be deployed in Bosnia. The newest mission amounts to nearly 300 infantry soldiers from all over the State of Indiana.

In addition to plain old home State pride for the work our National Guard personnel have done and are doing in Bosnia, it is with deep respect that I call attention to the preparation that is under way presently for the largest mobilization of Indiana's National Guard since World War II.

In the spring of 2004, the 38th Infantry Division Headquarters, based in east central Indiana, will deploy to Bosnia to run the Task Force Eagle Headquarters there and supervise all U.S. military operations. Hopefully, this 2004 mission will be the supervising of the final leg of our mission in that region.

For all the work that our men and women in the National Guard have done and will do in the future, Madam Speaker, I know I speak for all of my constituents in Indiana when I say, "Well done, good and faithful servants," and I thank them for all they have done to help secure relative peace and stability in the region.

House Concurrent Resolution 154 is a well-deserved tribute.

Mr. GILMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 154, a bill honoring the commitment of the Army National Guard combat units deployed in Bosnia and I urge my colleagues to give this measure their full support.

Our National Guard has played a vital role in our Nation's security, primarily by maintaining the concept of the "Citizen-Soldier." Our Nation's founders were distrustful of large standing armies. Consequently, the state militias, which later evolved into the National

Guard, have always served as a working framework that stood by ready to supplement and augment the officer core of the regular military in times of war.

The most recent example of this has been the long-standing contribution the Army National Guard has made to the peacekeeping deployment in the Balkans. The Army National Guard units have performed an important supporting role backing up our active duty forces in those hazardous operations.

National Guard members face far more unpredictable military service than their active duty counterparts. The nature of their job requires them to be "on call" and ready to deploy overseas at a moments notice. As such, smooth deployments are dependent on the cooperation of both guard-member families and employers.

This resolution, in recognition of these factors, commends the sacrifices made by the families of guard-members and their civilian employers.

It also recognizes the increasingly vital role the Army National Guard plays in our Nation's national security.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this measure honoring our Country's National Guard.

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 154 which honors our commitment to the Army National Guard combat units deployed in support of Army operations in Bosnia.

I have a special appreciation for this resolution today on two levels. As the Ranking Democrat on the House Military Readiness Subcommittee, issues of how to supplement the everyday personnel needs of our troops is a vital issue for us. Through the citizen soldiers of the National Guard, we are able to keep an all-volunteer force, which is as it should be in a free democratic Nation, and we have moved into the history-making realm by introducing National Guard troops into active component combat forces, as well as multinational forces.

On another level, for Texas, the knowledge that the 49th "Lone Star" Texas National Guard Armored Division in Bosnia was ushering in a new era of the composition of active-duty military personnel has made patriots in the state extremely proud. However inevitable it was, with over half of the Army's strength in the Guard and reserves, the decision nevertheless opened a new era for the population of our armed forces.

When the decision was announced, the 49th "Lone Star" National Guard Armored Division received an amazing number of calls from the active components offering help in training. The easy relationship between these comrades in arms is the foundation for the success of the mission and for future successes in deployments. It also debunks the theory that there is a rivalry between the active components and the Guard or reserves.

South Texas has a proud tradition of military and military support. This mission of the 49th "Lone Star" Division was no different. All elements of the 49th "Lone Star" Division were deployed through the Port of Corpus Christi, which was designated as a strategic sealift seaport in 1998. South Texas watched this history happening from the front row. We supported the 49th at the outset of their mission,

we applauded them at its conclusion, and we recognized the historic nature of the deployments of the Guard and reserves to front lines of our country's military deployments overseas.

South Texas support the National Guard and the reserves, we understand their commitment to our national security, and we thank them for their service to our nation. We honor their sacrifice, realize their critical importance to the country and we support providing the necessary resources to ensure their continued readiness condition.

I thank my colleagues for their work on this resolution.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam Speaker, I support this resolution to honor our National Guard troops in Bosnia. Especially the men and women of Georgia's 48th Brigade now serving in Bosnia. Georgia's National Guard has a long and cherished military history dating back as far as the 1730's. From helping to secure American independence, to the Spanish American War to World War I and II, to Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, Georgia's National Guard has played an important role in protecting the defending American interests around the world.

From the headquarters and part of the 148th Forward Support Battalion in Macon to the 2nd Battalion of Company A of the 121st Infantry based in Moultrie and Valdosta, the 48th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) continues to honor its past by proudly serving in Bosnia. The men and women of the 48th have spent months undergoing extensive training and preparation for this deployment. They have put their jobs and family lives on hold and all told will have been away from their homes and families for almost a year.

Today, we say thank you to the families and employers for their sacrifices in supporting our National Guard. And we say thank you and God bless you to the citizen soldiers who are doing such an outstanding job to support U.S. peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 154, a resolution honoring the continued commitment of the Army National Guard combat units deployed in Bosnia and recognizing the sacrifices made by these units.

Madam Speaker, as our country moved away from the cold war, we made a conscious decision to lower the size of our active duty forces. At the same time, as a matter of policy, we maintained our goal of fighting two simultaneous wars. The only way we could achieve both goals was to increase our reliance on our national guard and military reserve units.

For years, national guard and reserve units were thought of safe as ways to fulfill military service obligations or collect a little extra money every month. For decades that was true. Each drilling reservist or national guardsman reported for duty one weekend a month and two weeks per year, and that was all we asked of them. That whole concept of being a reservist changed during the 1990s, a decade in which our reserve and guard units were called to active duty time and time again including places such as the Middle East, Africa, and of course Bosnia.

Every time we as a nation call up a reserve unit, the vast majority of the members of that unit are pulled away from their families and jobs here in the United States. In addition to the personal sacrifices these individuals make, often times there is a monetary sacrifice as well. With everything we ask of our reserve and national guard personnel, they truly do deserve special recognition, and I am pleased to stand before our nation today and say thank you.

To every member of a national guard unit, to every reservist, to their families, and to every employer who hires or employs a member of a guard or reserve unit, I say thank you for your support of our nation. As the only super-power, the United States is expected to provide leadership in distant locations throughout the world. We have done this unilaterally, and as members of multi-national forces. When the nation has called, our citizen-soldiers have responded and continue to respond. We all owe them a debt of gratitude, and again I say thank you.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res 154, honoring National Guard Combat units deployed in support of operations in Bosnia.

I know the commitments and sacrifice that the citizen soldiers and their families must make in supporting the defense of this great nation.

I have done my share of traveling and I have visited with my fellow soldiers in the National Guard, both in my congressional capacity and in my Reserve capacity.

As such, I am well aware how the National Guard contributes to national security.

Believe me, it is a story that needs to be shared with hometown USA, and more importantly, with Members of Congress.

Today's National Guard is an essential component of the Total Force.

No longer a force in reserve; the National Guard is integral to all operations today.

In fact, it is a force in readiness.

Because the military today cannot perform its missions without the support and augmentation of the National Guard, it is being used more frequently, and to a greater extent than ever before.

Since we started sending soldiers to Bosnia in 1995, the National Guard has assumed an every increasing role in that deployment.

In fact, the Bosnia operation marks a pivotal point in this nation's military history.

It marks the first time that a National Guard division headquarters served as the command and control element of Active Army component and multi-national forces in the Post Cold War.

This is truly remarkable!

According to the Department of Defense, our NATO partners, and the population in Bosnia, one cannot tell the difference between the National Guardsmen, and the soldiers of the active component.

By any measure, our National Guard personnel have performed extremely well, completing vital missions and bringing critical, and in some cases unique, skills to this operation.

Operations in the Balkans are proof that our reserve forces cannot be viewed as low priority units for manpower, equipment, and funding.

That is a luxury we cannot afford.

H. Con. Res. 154 is a reminder to all of us in this body, to all the leaders in the Pentagon, and to all Americans that the National Guard is critical to the defense of this nation, and we must support our reserve component forces if we hope to be victorious in the future.

I urge my colleagues to adopt this resolution.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution. I would like to thank the gentleman from Georgia who introduced this legislation for this opportunity to honor the commitment and courage of the Army National Guard units that continue to serve as part of the NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.

In April of 2000, during our Easter recess, I had the opportunity to visit the soldiers of the 49th "Lone Star" Armored Division of the Texas National Guard, during their tour of duty in Bosnia.

This unit recorded a first in Army history, as it was the first time that a National Guard division headquarters was the command and control element of active duty component forces as well as multinational forces. These Texas citizen-soldiers acquitted themselves with honor and proved that the Guard is a reliable part of our armed forces.

The soldiers in these units aren't the only ones who deserve recognition. These men and women would not be able to serve without the sacrifices made by their families, who do without a spouse or parent, or their employers, who lose the service of a valued employee, for the length of their tour.

This mission underscores the value of the National Guard and Reserve to the security of the United States. As members of Congress, we recognize the benefit of the National Guard and Reserve and I hope that we will recognize the needs of these units so that they can continue to be an effective component of our armed services.

Mr. BEREUTER. Madam Speaker, this Member rises to express support for H. Con. Res. 154, recognizing the role of Army National Guard combat units operating in Bosnia. The distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is to be commended for introducing this legislation which also recognizes the sacrifices of reservists' families during arduous deployments.

Additionally, this Member wishes to use this occasion to recognize the crucial role Army National Guard support units play in NATO peacekeeping missions. Simply, the Army National Guard combat units cannot perform their overseas duties without the assistance of support units. For example, the 24th Medical Company, which is based in this Member's district and is comprised of reservists from Nebraska and Kansas, deployed to Bosnia in 1999. During its deployment, the company provided key medical assistance for NATO forces. In one instance, the company even found itself rescuing a combat unit which found itself trapped in a minefield. To avoid detonation of the mines, the combat unit stood on the hood of its vehicle as the 24th Medical Company lowered its helicopter and whisked the other unit to safety. Support units often are placed into precarious situations and are deserving of recognition for their efforts beyond their routine duties.

Madam Speaker, legislation such as H. Con. Res. 154 offers Congress an opportunity to reaffirm the important role of all National Guard combat and support such units in each of the armed services.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 154.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 163) recognizing the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day and expressing the sense of Congress that history be regarded as a means of understanding the past and solving the challenges of the future, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 163

Whereas news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the country until long after the conclusion of the Civil War, especially in the Southwestern United States;

Whereas the African Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest thereafter celebrated June 19, known as Juneteenth Independence Day, as the anniversary of their emancipation;

Whereas these African Americans handed down that tradition from generation to generation as an inspiration and encouragement for future generations;

Whereas Juneteenth Independence Day celebrations have thus been held for 136 years to honor the memory of all those who endured slavery and especially those who moved from slavery to freedom; and

Whereas the faith and strength of character shown by these former slaves remains an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, region, or race: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) Congress recognizes the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day, an important date in the Nation's history, and encourages the continued celebration of this day to provide an opportunity for all people of the United States to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the Nation; and

(2) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) history be regarded as a means for understanding the past and solving the challenges of the future; and

(B) the celebration of the end of slavery is an important and enriching part of the history and heritage of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 163.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 163, and commend the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for sponsoring this important resolution. The resolution recognizes the historic significance of Juneteenth Independence Day, and encourages its continued celebration so all Americans can learn more about our past.

The resolution also expresses the sense of Congress that knowing our history helps us understand our past and solve challenges we face in the future, and it expresses the sense of Congress that the celebration of the end of slavery is an important and enriching part of the history and heritage of the United States.

Madam Speaker, Juneteenth has long been recognized as the day to celebrate the end of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth is the traditional celebration of the day on which the last slaves in America were freed.

Although slavery was abolished officially in 1863, it took over 2 years for news of freedom to spread to all slaves. On June 19th, 1865, U.S. General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and announced that the State's 200,000 slaves were free. Vowing never to forget the date, the former slaves coined the nickname Juneteenth, a blend of the words June and 19th, actually today. This holiday originated in the Southwest, but today it is celebrated throughout the Nation.

This resolution underscores that the observance of Juneteenth Independence Day is an important and enriching part of our country's history and heritage. The celebration of Juneteenth provides an opportunity for all Americans to learn more about our common past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped our great Nation.